

# Klamath Steelhead SMU

**ESA Designation:**  
*Not Warranted 2001*

**State Status:**  
*Not Listed*

**Interim Assessment:**  
*At Risk*

This SMU consists of two populations in the Klamath basin upstream of the Oregon/California border. The Klamath Mountains Province ESU, of which the Klamath Steelhead SMU is a part, was determined to be “not warranted” for listing under the Endangered Species Act in 2001. Construction of a series of three dams without passage between 1918 and 1962 effectively extirpated the Klamath Lake tributary population. Steelhead persist below Iron Gate Dam but only a very small portion of anadromous accessible waters within the basin extend into Oregon. A steelhead population may exist in Oregon in Upper Cottonwood Creek, a tributary to the Klamath below Iron Gate Dam. No data are available to assess the current status of this population. Electrofishing surveys in Cottonwood Creek, Cow Creek, and Long John Creek yielded *O. mykiss*, but no adult size trout suggesting these may have been juvenile steelhead. Additionally, a potential steelhead redd was observed in Cottonwood Creek by ODFW in 2003. The SMU fails the distribution criterion because access to a substantial portion of the historical habitat was eliminated by the Copco Dams and Iron Gate Dam. The near-term sustainability of the SMU is at risk because of the loss of one of the two populations, loss of substantial habitat for the other population, and indications from anecdotal information that the population is depressed. Suitable data and other information on populations in this SMU provide a moderate level of confidence in the assessment of the interim criteria.

| Population    | Exist       | Dist.       | Abund.                    | Prod. | Ind. | Hybrid |
|---------------|-------------|-------------|---------------------------|-------|------|--------|
| Upper Klamath | Pass        | <i>Fail</i> | --                        | --    | --   | Pass   |
| Klamath Lake  | <i>Fail</i> |             | <i>Extinct Population</i> |       |      |        |

Percent of Existing Populations Meeting Criteria

